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FM AMEMBASSY TASHKENT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5579
INFO RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ALMATY PRIORITY 7815
RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT PRIORITY 1905
RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK PRIORITY 2430
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE PRIORITY 2331
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 1415
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 6621
RUEHLN/AMCONSUL ST PETERSBURG PRIORITY 0009
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L TASHKENT 000774

SIPDIS

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RUEHMO TO RUEHLM

DEPT FOR SCA/CEN, DRL/IL, G/TIP, EB, PRM
LABOR FOR I/LAB

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/20/2016
TAGS: [ELAB](#) [SMIG](#) [ECON](#) [EFIN](#) [SOCI](#) [PGOV](#) [RS](#) [UZ](#)
SUBJECT: RUSSIA CONSIDERS OPENING CONSULATES, REGULARIZING
LABOR FLOW

REF: A) TASHKENT 515 B) 05 TASHKENT 3253

Classified By: AMB. JON R. PURNELL, FOR REASONS 1.4 (B, D)

¶1. (C) Summary: Russian Embassy Counselor Yury Lebedev told Poloff that Russia is considering opening consulates in Samarkand and Ferghana City. This would be based on a reciprocal agreement under which Uzbekistan would open two consulates in Russia. However, a final decision has not yet been reached. Lebedev, who covers labor issues, told Poloff that Russia and Uzbekistan have yet to conclude an agreement on labor and migration issues. He said that discussions are continuing within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEc), which is working to develop and harmonize migration legislation. The largest concentrations of Uzbeks are reportedly in Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Rostov, Volgograd and Ivanovo. Many are also working in the gas sector, in the Siberian city of Urengoy. According to Lebedev, Uzbek workers now have multiple ways to legalize their status in Russia. Remittances from Russia to Uzbekistan could be "worth more than Tajikistan's annual budget." End summary.

¶2. (C) Russian Embassy Counselor Yury Lebedev told Poloff that Russia and Uzbekistan have held discussions regarding opening consulates. Under the tentative plan, Russia would open consulates in Samarkand and Ferghana City, with Uzbekistan opening two consulates in Russia, one of which would likely be in Saint Petersburg. However, no final decision has yet been reached. (Note: Uzbekistan and Russia are currently only represented through their Embassies. End note.)

¶3. (C) Lebedev, who covers labor issues at the Russian Embassy, told Poloff that Russia and Uzbekistan have not yet concluded an agreement on labor and migration. The governments are continuing to negotiate within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEc) integration committees. The EurAsEc discussions have recognized the need to develop appropriate legislation on labor migration, and to harmonize migration laws. Lebedev commented that nobody knows the exact number of Uzbeks in Russia, but that the largest concentrations are in Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Rostov, Volgograd and Ivanovo. He added that many are also working in the gas sector in the Siberian city of Urengoy. A labor and migration agreement would regularize the status of

Uzbeks in Russia, and would also provide greater clarity on the number of Uzbeks there. (Note: The Russian Ambassador recently told the Ambassador that almost two million Uzbeks work in Russia - ref A. End note.)

14. (C) Lebedev stated that migration flows to Russia are not organized by any government agency, and that the Uzbek Ministry of Labor does not play much of a role. Lebedev stated that Uzbek migrant workers now have several ways in which to work legally. Under regulations passed in March 2005, workers have three days in which to register with local authorities, followed by a month in which to find an employer. Workers can also ask Russian local government officials to assist with job placement. In addition, the Russian and Uzbek governments can jointly draft job contracts, with one state entity inviting workers from another state organization.

15. (C) Lebedev stated that certain international reports have valued remittances from Russia to Uzbekistan as worth "more than Tajikistan's annual budget." (Note: According to Uzbek Central Bank documents, remittances to Uzbekistan through official channels average \$1.2 billion per year, with most of the funds coming from Russia; remittances through unofficial channels are much higher. The Russian Ambassador recently told the Ambassador that Uzbek workers send home \$1,000 per year on average, which he estimated would total \$2 billion annually - ref A. End note.) Labor migration to Russia typically peaks during the summer, at the height of the agriculture season.

PURNELL